

# Reject this damaging application

THE battle to save Latchmore Brook is heating up. I reproduce below the objection that I have submitted to the planners:

Objection to the Latchmore Brook wetland restoration planning application: 16/00571

The question arises as to whether there is a fundamental and insurmountable conflict of interest for the Park Authority to determine an application which involves a scheme of which the authority is itself a beneficiary.

That however, is a matter for the Secretary of State.

I will therefore, confine my observations to the application itself.

The loss of amenity and ecology at one of England's premier beauty spots, consequent upon this proposal for a large engineering project is wholly disproportionate to any potential gain over the long term.



The likelihood is that the 100,000 tons of 'alien' clay and hoggin will, over future years, constitute 'pollution' as it is washed out.

I have been acquainted with two reviews by experts that fundamentally challenge the assumptions of the applicant.

The previous wetland restorations in the New Forest carried out by the applicant, have not been a success and require constant repair.

To be frank, they look dreadful.

The realistic prospect is of transforming the current breath-taking views into a degraded landscape.

Earlier drainage work by

men with little more than spades, which straightened the watercourse in some places has nevertheless resulted in a diverse and abundant ecosystem.

In many places in the catchment, nature has already restored its own courses over a properly functioning flood plain.

The damage that will result from the removal of trees to accommodate large earth moving vehicles and the filling in of the current watercourse will destroy an environment that will take many years to recover, for no appreciable gain for the habitats that currently thrive.

The evidence provided by

the applicant that the works will prove successful is unpersuasive (the applicant's own deeply flawed review, Cox, Janes and Aaberg 2015, fails to provide any testable evidence).

Indeed, the applicant has been unable even to define what success looks like, in terms of the increase in numbers of species against any defined current baseline.

Equally, the Environmental Statement estimates beneficial effects without evidence to support these, merely citing the flawed Cox, Janes and Aaberg review.

Insufficient hydrological modelling has been employed and incorrect estimates of peak flow rates have been used.

To conclude, the proposal is disastrous for an important and much-loved environment.

I urge the committee to reject the application as being deeply damaging to the New Forest.